

See discussions, stats, and author profiles for this publication at: <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/269166834>

Decorative motifs of the Early Iron Age (Yaz I) pottery in southern Turkmenistan

Article · January 2011

CITATIONS

5

READS

1,809

1 author:



[Nazarij Buławka](#)

Catalan Institute of Classical Archaeology

20 PUBLICATIONS 22 CITATIONS

SEE PROFILE

NAZAR BUŁAWKA

DECORATIVE MOTIFS OF THE EARLY IRON AGE (YAZ I) POTTERY IN SOUTHERN TURKMENISTAN

In the early phase of the Iron Age, approximately the second half of the 2nd millennium BC, the territory of present-day Turkmenistan was divided into two cultural zones: the south-western and the south-eastern ones. The first covered the plain stretching between the Caspian Sea and the Kopet-Dag Mountains, including some valleys in north-western Iran. It was occupied by the so-called Ancient Dakhistan Culture. The second zone extended from the foothills of the central part of the Kopet Dag Mountains towards the fertile delta of the River Murghab. This area was occupied by the Yaz I culture which takes its name from the first level of the site of Yaz-depe in the Murghab delta.¹

The most distinctive trait of the Early Iron Age culture is the presence of handmade and painted pottery decorated with geometrical motifs. The ceramics of this type occurred in numerous sites ranging from the northern foothills of the Kopet-Dag, by Margiana to northern Bactria and Sogdiana. Some similarities in the decoration are seen even as far as ceramics of Ferghana² and usually are considered as an indication to a presence of the same culture in the Early Iron Age in this vast territory.³ However, scholars usually refer to the decoration of Early Iron Age pottery in this area in a very simplistic way, describing it as a frieze of triangles placed below the rim of the vessel,⁴ but even cursory analysis of the material suggests that some variety of motifs was employed to decorate the pottery of different regions, including the territory of present-day Turkmenistan.

Despite an extensive literature on the Early Iron Age in Central Asia there is a substantial lack of deepened

studies over the decoration of painted vessels of this period. These results of the analysis of decorative motifs of Yaz I pottery found in Turkmenistan represent a first step towards changing this situation. The analyzed material is a collection of painted pottery fragments found and published during the archaeological excavations of about thirteen sites as well as several tens more of others identified during the survey conducted since 1904 (Fig. 1).⁵ This collection amounts to a total of about 440 fragments.

Usually decoration of Yaz I painted pottery is formed of various motifs having an outline of an upward-pointed triangle and creating a frieze in the upper part of the vessel. In some cases of better preserved fragments of pottery sherds a frieze formed of about three (or more) motifs meeting each other at angles occurs. Each frieze is by and large restricted by two lines, one placed below the rim of the vessel, and the other at the approximate height of its shoulders. On some examples there are also multiple superimposed friezes, which are usually separated by horizontal lines into registers. Sometimes smaller separate patterns occur in the empty space between triangular motifs.

The strong fragmentation of the pottery material that is dealt with here creates a huge impediment in the recognition of the overall composition of the decoration. Furthermore, quality of some early publications of the material is strikingly poor. Yet it is possible (with few exceptions) to recognize individual motifs decorating the pottery of Yaz I in southern Turkmenistan. The detailed examination of the published pottery fragments allows to make a division of the motifs decorating the Yaz I painted pottery into four groups:

¹ PH.L. KOHL, *Central Asia. Palaeolithic beginnings to the Iron Age*, Paris 1984, 193.

² V.M. MASSON, *Kul'turogenez Drevnej Central'noj Azii*, Leningrad 2006, 108–109.

³ Nadi-Ali, Mundigak, in southern Afghanistan, as well as Pirak in Pakistan; [see:] V.I. SARIANIDI, *Kul'tura naspisnoj keramiki ranneželeznogo veka Ūgo-Zapadnoj Azii*, "Informacionnyj Bülleten' Meždunarodnaä Associaciä po Izučeniü Kul'tur Central'noj Azii" 9, 1985, 5.

⁴ V.M. MASSON, *Kul'turogenez Drevnej...*, 105.

⁵ The subject of the analysis in article will be sites in southern Turkmenistan only, which have published illustrations of painted pottery – Ovadan-depe, Anau-depe, Yashilli-depe, Yasi-depe, sites in Dashli oasis, El'ken-depe, Garaoi-depe, Ulug-depe, as well as No. 999, Takhirbai-depe, Uch-depe 10, Yaz-depe, which are located in Murghab River Delta, and few micro-oases – Taip, Takhirbai, Togolok. Sites of Ancient Dakhistan Culture and Yaz I in Margiana Oasis on the map (Fig. 1) were marked schematically.

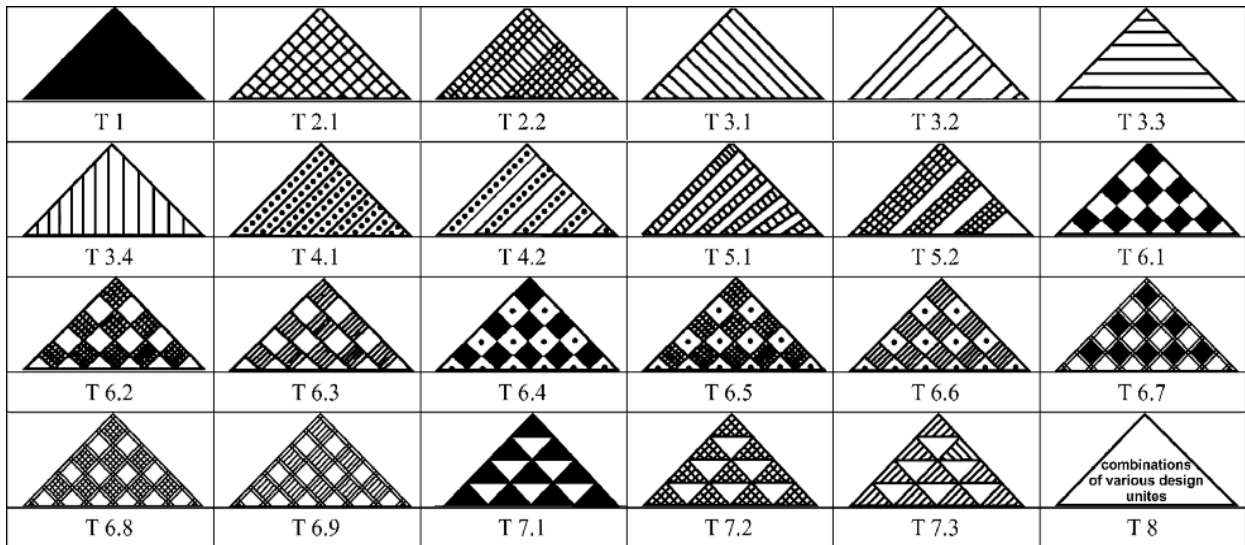


Fig. 2. Decorative motifs of Yaz I painted pottery – Group I Triangles.

Ryc. 2. Motywy dekoracyjne ceramiki malowanej Yaz I – Grupa I Trójkąty.

Group I. Triangular motifs are most common in the decoration of Yaz I pottery in southern Turkmenistan. This group consists of triangles (Group I T) and motifs resembling chevrons (Group I C). Main feature that distinguishes the “triangle” from “chevron” is the presence of the parallel arrangement (e.g. lines) in the inner space.

Within the Group I T – “triangles” are distinguished by a number of variants, which are characterized by

miscellaneous kinds of inner filling of this geometrical shape (Fig. 2).

Group I C “chevrons” is also divided into a number of variants, which are characterized by different ways of realization of this shape or its inner filling (Fig. 3). Most of “chevrons” consist of two intersecting or adjacent parts, others that have more confusing appearance (e.g. C 3.3–5) should be considered as deriving from less elaborated motifs.

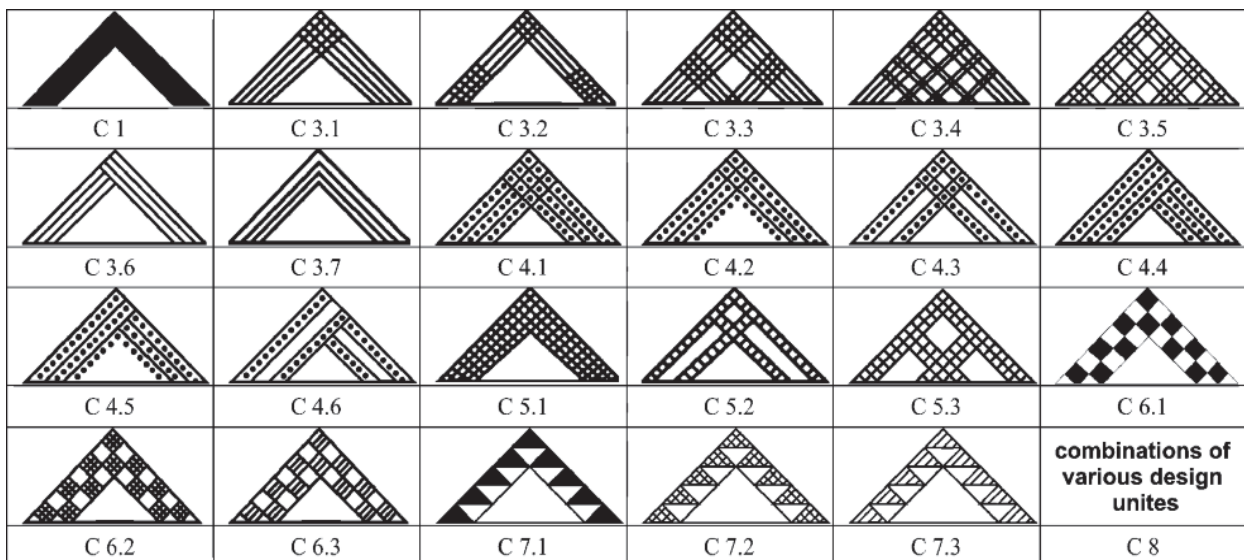


Fig. 3. Decorative motifs of Yaz I painted pottery – Group I Chevrons.

Ryc. 3. Motywy dekoracyjne ceramiki malowanej Yaz I – Grupa I Szevrony.

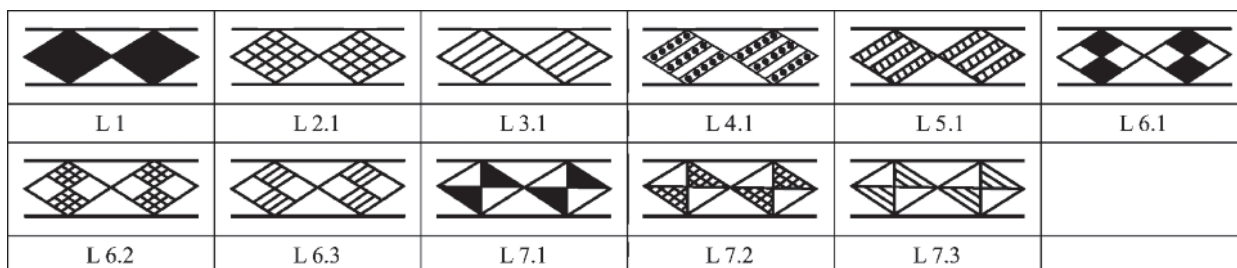


Fig. 4. Decorative motifs of Yaz I painted pottery – Group II Lozenges.

Ryc. 4. Motywy dekoracyjne ceramiki malowanej Yaz I – Grupa II Romby.

Group II is represented by lozenges (Fig. 4). Usually they are placed in the space bordered by two lines. There are also exceptions to this rule, however. In this group all the available possibilities of inner filling are likely to be found. The most original motif that could be distinguished here is the variant of checkered pattern, when the lozenge is divided into smaller triangles that are in contact with each other with their upper corners in the middle (L 7).

Within these two groups six main kinds of filling of the inner area of motifs can be observed: solid color, grid, lines, lines and dots, “ladders”, checkered pattern as well as their combination. The latter however is relatively rare.

Group III is much less homogeneous and it consists of horizontal bands composed of different patterns, bands of various widths that are painted with solid color, horizontal, wavy, or zigzag lines, or of irregular motifs (Fig. 5).

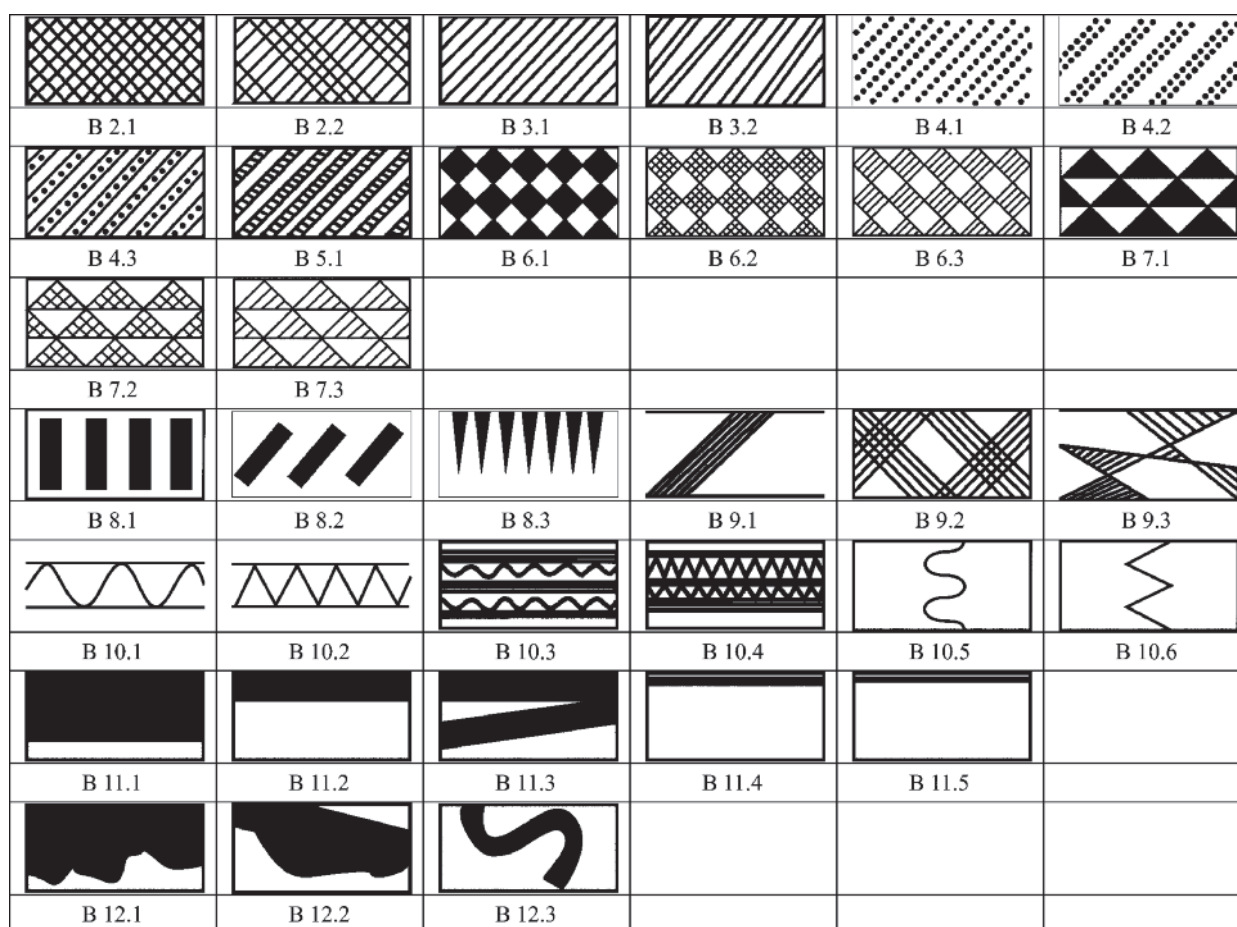


Fig. 5. Decorative motifs of Yaz I painted pottery – Group III Bands.

Ryc. 5. Motywy dekoracyjne ceramiki malowanej Yaz I – Grupa III Pasy.

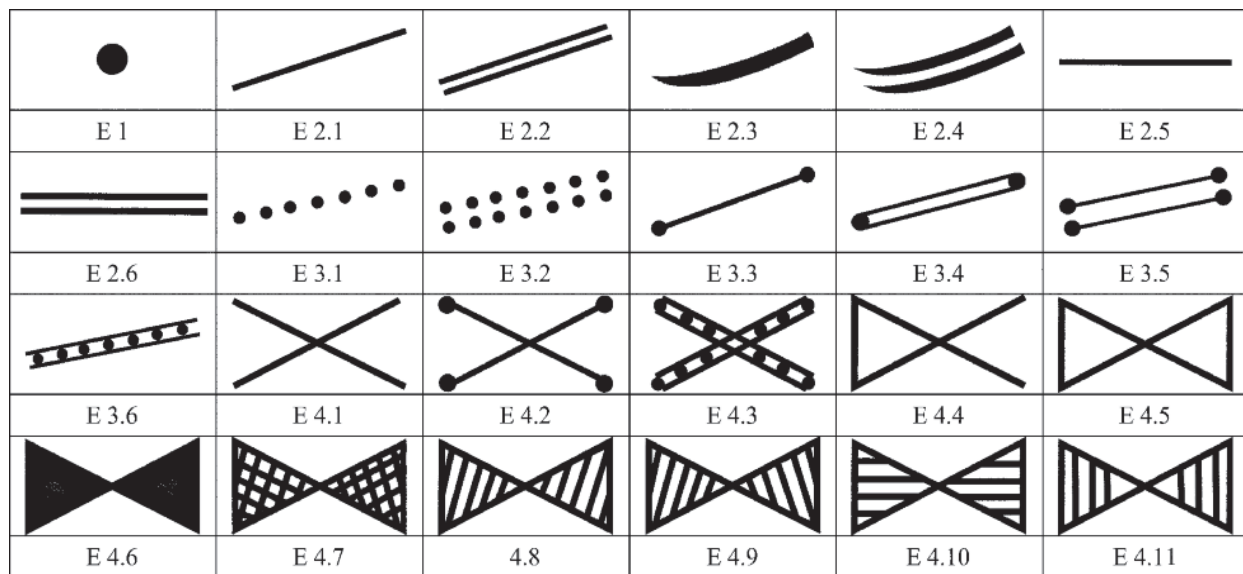


Fig. 6. Decorative motifs of Yaz I painted pottery – Group IV Additional elements.

Ryc. 6. Motywy dekoracyjne ceramiki malowanej Yaz I – Grupa IV Elementy dodatkowe.

Group IV. Decorative motifs described above could be accompanied by small drawings placed in the empty space of a vessel. They can be generally defined as a filling or additional motifs (Fig. 6).

It was assumed that in order to answer whether the decoration of Yaz I pottery in the area of southern Turkmenistan is homogeneous or not, the frequency of distinguished above motifs in the decoration of pottery of each site in the region should be studied. As it results from the analysis, the decoration of the pottery of the sites which are situated nearly to one another shows a greater similarity. These sites could be arranged in four groups according to the differences in frequency of occurrence of the motifs used for decoration of pottery.

There could be distinguished three groups of sites in the Kopet Dag piedmont belt area. They are usually located in the vicinity of the same small water-courses that flow or have once flowed from the upper ranges of the Kopet Dag Mountains. The first distinguished group is formed of three sites – Ovadan-depe,⁶ Anau-depe⁷ and Yashilli-depe⁸ – located in the vicinity of Ashgabat. The sites of the second group are currently located in the most fertile part of the Kopet Dag piedmont belt watered by Dorungyar and Gozgon streams. The group is represented by Yasi-depe,⁹ El'ken-depe¹⁰ and few other archaeological sites located between those small rivers.¹¹ The third group is formed by two sites – Garaoi-depe¹² and

⁶ V.M. MASSON, *Raspisnââ keramika po raskopkah Kuftina*, "Trudy Ūžno-Turkmenistanskoj Arheologiĉeskoj Kompleksnoj Ėkspedicii" VII, 1956, pl. XLI; V.M. MASSON, *Drevnezemledel'ĉeskaâ Kul'tura Margiany*, Materialy i Issledovaniâ po Arheologii SSSR 73, Moskva/Leningrad 1959, pl. XXXI.

⁷ H. SCHMIDT, *Archaeological excavations in Anau and Old Merv*, (in:) R. Pumpelly (ed.), *Explorations in Turkestan. Expedition of 1904. Prehistoric Civilizations of Anau, Volume I*, Washington 1908, pl. 35, figs. 8, 9.

⁸ G. GUTLYEV, *Stratigrafiĉeskij űurf Åsyly-depe u Gâursa*, (in:) V.M. Masson (ed.), *Novye issledovaniâ po arheologii Turkmenistana*, Aűgabat 1980, 21–34; G. GUTLYEV, *Ū.A. Zadneprovskij, Åsildepe – Ėtalonnyj pamâtnik ranneűeleznogo veka na territorii Severnoj Parfii*, "Izvestiâ Akademii Nauk Turkmenskoj SSR. Seriâ Obűestvennyh Nauk" 1985/4, 44–50.

⁹ G. GUTLYEV, *Raboty na poselenii ranneűeleznogo veka Åsy-depe*

u Baba-Durmaza, "Karakumskie Drevnosti" III, 1970, 64–71; G. GUTLYEV, *Raskopki poseleniâ ranneűeleznogo veka Åsy-depe v Kaabkinskom rajone*, "Karakumskie Drevnosti" V, 1977, 18–24.

¹⁰ A.A. MARUűENKO, *El'ken-depe (Otĉet o raskopkah 1953, 1955 i 1956 gg.)*, "Trudy Instituta Istorii, arheologii i ětnografii Akademii Nauk Turkmenskoj SSR" V, 1959, 54–109.

¹¹ V.N. PILIPKO, *Rannij űeleznyj vek Ėteka (Ūűnyj Turkmenistan)*, "Informacionnyj Bűlleten' Meűdunarodnââ Associaciâ po Izuĉeniű Kul'tur Centralnoj Azii" 11, 1986, pl. 1.1, 2.

¹² G. GUTLYEV, *Raskopki Garaoi-depe*, (in:) L.G. Drâмова, A.D. Romanovskaâ (ed.), *Novye arheologiĉeskie otkrytiâ v Turkmenistane*, Aűgabat 1982. Here was not taken to account the chart of pottery drawings (fig. 3) that was also published previously as a pottery coming from Yashilli-depe (see: G. GUTLYEV, *Stratigrafiĉeskij űurf Åsyly-depe u Gâursa...*, fig. 5).

Name of the site	T 1	T 2.1	T 2.2	T 3.1	T 3.2	T 3.3	T 4	T 5	T 6	T 7	T 8	C 3.1	C 3.2	C 3.3-5	C 3.7	C 4	C 5.1-2	C 5.3	C 6	C 7	L 2	L 3	L 6	L 7	B 2.1	B 2.2	B 3-5	B 6	B 8	B 9.1	B 9.2	B 10	B 11	B 12		
Ovadan-depe		$\frac{1}{1}$					$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$		$\frac{1}{1}$					$\frac{1}{1}$	$\frac{1}{1}$																			
Anau-depe			$\frac{1}{1}$						$\frac{1}{1}$					$\frac{1}{1}$																						
Yashilli-depe	$\frac{4}{4}$			$\frac{1}{1}$				$\frac{2}{2}$	$\frac{1}{2}$	$\frac{2}{2}$		$\frac{6}{6}$	$\frac{5}{5}$	$\frac{5}{5}$											$\frac{1}{1}$	$\frac{1}{1}$	$\frac{1}{1}$	$\frac{1}{1}$	$\frac{2}{5}$	$\frac{1}{1}$	$\frac{2}{5}$		$\frac{7}{7}$	$\frac{3}{3}$		
















Name of the site															
Ovadan-depe															
Anau-depe															
Yashilli-depe			$\frac{6}{6}$			$\frac{1}{1}$	$\frac{1}{1}$	$\frac{1}{1}$			$\frac{1}{1}$	$\frac{1}{2}$			

Fig. 7. The frequency of Yaz I painted motifs – First group of sites – Kopet Dag piedmont zone.

Ryc. 7. Frekwencja motywów malowanych Yaz I – Pierwsza grupa stanowisk – podnóża gór Kopet Dag.

Ulug-depe,¹³ located in the vicinity of the River Dushak. The fourth group consists of the sites located in the delta of the River Murghab, which flows from the Hindu Kush Mountains and disappears in the Karakum Desert creating a large, fertile oasis located to the east from the Kopet Dag piedmont zone. In the area of the Murghab delta a great amount of sites is known that were discovered during various surveys conducted by the Italian-Turkmen-Russian mission in the frame of the project “Archaeological Map of Murghab Delta”¹⁴ as well as by previous archeological investigations done by Soviet scholars. Only few of these sites however were actually explored and published.

In the tables that were specially prepared for this paper two methods of marking the motifs frequency were used. Both these scales were represented in the form of mathematical fraction. Hereby, the first (fraction numeral), indicates to the quantity of the most certain examples of a particular motif. The second scale (fraction nominative), was used also for uncertain and poorly preserved examples of decoration. It must be noted here that sometimes a poorly preserved design could be reconstructed as a few different motifs. It is why in some cases the “numeral” and “nominative” ratio indicates to a different quantity of a particular motif. It should also be emphasized that in case significant differences between those scales are present, the ratio of “nominative” scale points rather to the uncertain examples of a specific motif.

The first group of sites in the Kopet Dag piedmont zone (Ovadan-depe, Anau-depe, Yashilli-depe) does not deliver the possibility of making the complex analysis of the motifs frequency. This is caused by the lack of sufficient quantity of published pottery at the first two sites. However, some differences between the sites of this group could be observed (Fig. 7). Thus, motif T 2.2 occurs only at Anau-depe while T 4 or C 4 only at Ovadan-depe. Moreover, at Ovadan-depe there appear three belts filled with “ladders” and a very distinctive checkered pattern in a form of triangles. The state of preservation does not create a possibility to clear interpretation of this motif. Nevertheless, it could be reconstructed as a triangle filled with a combination of “ladders” and checkered pattern (T 8), or three superimposed chevrons.

Similarly to the previous group, the detailed examination of motifs decorating pottery of the second group of sites is difficult (although to a much lesser degree), due to the insufficient quantity of published pottery. It mostly concerns the reports of archaeological works at the Dashli oasis and the pottery kiln located in the vicinity of El'ken-depe. The detailed examination of published pottery from the sites in this group revealed the presence of few differences in occurrence of particular motifs (Fig. 8). It mostly applies to the absence of such motifs as T 2.1, T 3.2, T 3.3 and the subgroup T 5 as well as C 3 in the case of El'ken-depe, but also the absence of T 1, T 7, B 3-5 at Yasi-

¹³ V.I. SARIANIDI, *Issledovanie sloev rannezeleznogo veka na Ulug-depe*, “Arheologičeskie Otkrytiä 1970 goda”, 1971, 433-434; V.M. MASSON, V.I. SARIANIDI, *Central Asia: Turkmenia before the Achaemenids*, London 1972, pl. 51; R. BOUCHARLAT, H.-P. FRANCFORT, O. LECOMTE, *The citadel of Ulug Depe and the Iron Age archaeological sequence in southern Central Asia*, “Iranica Antiqua” XL, 2005, 479-513.

¹⁴ A. GUBAEV, G. KOSHELENKO, M. TOSI (eds.), *The Archaeological Map of the Murghab Delta. Preliminary Reports 1990-95*, Rome 1998; S. SALVATORI, M. TOSI, B. CERASETTI (eds.), *Volume II. The Bronze Age and Early Iron Age in the Margiana Lowlands: Facts and Methodological Proposal for a Redefinition of the Research Strategies*, B.A.R. International Series 1806: The Archaeological Map of the Murghab Delta. Studies and Reports, Oxford 2008.

Name of the site	T1	T2.1	T2.2	T3.1	T3.2	T3.3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	C3.1	C3.2	C3.3-5	C3.7	C4	C5.1-2	C5.3	C6	C7	L2	L3	L6	L7	B2.1	B2.2	B3-5	B6	B8	B9.1	B9.2	B10	B11	B12	
Yasi-depe		2 9	2 1	2 4	2 1	1 1		5 1	4 1			8 4	4 1	8 3			4 10				1 1					2 2		1 1						7 7	2 5
Dashli oasis														2 2																					
El'ken-depe	2 2		2 2	1 1					3 3	1 2					1 1		3 3		1 1							2 2								1 1	3 3
El'ken-d. (kiln)	1 1									1 1		1 2	2 2																1 3						

Name of the site	E 1	E 2.1	E 2.2	E 2.3	E 2.4	E 2.5	E 2.6	E 3.4	E 3.5	E 3.6	E 4.1	E 4.3	E 4.4	E 4.5	E 4.6-11
Yasi-depe		1 1	1 1		1 1										
Dashli oasis		1 1		1 1											
El'ken-depe					1 1							1 1			
El'ken-d. (kiln)					1 1						1 1				

Fig. 8. The frequency of Yaz I painted motifs – Second group of sites – Kopet Dag piedmont zone.

Ryc. 8. Frekwencja motywów malowanych Yaz I – Druga grupa stanowisk – podnóża gór Kopet Dag.

-depe. However, it is unclear whether the triangle filled with oblique grid in form of steps (T 2.2) appears only at El'ken-depe or also at Yasi-depe. Some differences could also be observed in the occurrence of particular examples of additional elements (Group IV), which are present numerously in the second group of sites. There is a group of motifs of Group IV which are present exclusively at El'ken-depe and the kiln located in the vicinity of this site (E 4.1, E 4.3). It should also be emphasized that other additional elements that were present at Yasi-depe (E 2.1-3) were not identified at El'ken-depe. As it concerns the painted pottery of other sites in this group, it has parallels to ceramics

of Yasi-depe and El'ken-depe. The motifs of painted pottery from the Dashli oasis (C 3.3-5) find their parallels in Yasi-depe as well as on ceramics found in the pottery kiln in the vicinity of El'ken-depe; however, not on the pottery from El'ken-depe. The examples of painted motifs from that kiln have their relation to pottery from El'ken-depe (T 1) as well as other sites (C 3.1, C 3.3-5), but there is also one motif that is present in this group exclusively on painted pottery from this kiln (B 9.1).

The repertory of the motifs on painted pottery from the third group of sites in the Kopet Dag piedmont zone – Ulug-depe,¹⁵ Garaoi-depe¹⁶ – is very varied (Fig. 9).

Name of the site	T1	T2.1	T2.2	T3.1	T3.2	T3.3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	C3.1	C3.2	C3.3-5	C3.7	C4	C5.1-2	C5.3	C6	C7	L2	L3	L6	L7	B2.1	B2.2	B3-5	B6	B8	B9.1	B9.2	B10	B11	B12
Garaoi-depe	1 1	1 4		1 1				1 3	1 5			1 2	2 3	2 3			1 3		3 3		3 6	1 1	3 3	1 1	1 3	4 4	3 3			1 1		1 2	21 21	5 7
Ulug-depe	5 5	3 3	1 1	1 1	1 1			1 2	1 7	1 1	5 6	3 3	1 1	3 3	1 3		1 2	1 1	2 2		1 1	1 2				1 1	1 1						1 1	

Name of the site	E 1	E 2.1	E 2.2	E 2.3	E 2.4	E 2.5	E 2.6	E 3.4	E 3.5	E 3.6	E 4.1	E 4.3	E 4.4	E 4.5	E 4.6-11
Garaoi-depe		5 7		1 1		1							1 1		
Ulug-depe	1 1		1 1	1 1					1 1		1 1			3 3	4 4

Fig. 9. The frequency of Yaz I painted motifs – Third group of sites – Kopet Dag piedmont zone.

Ryc. 9. Frekwencja motywów malowanych Yaz I – Trzecia grupa stanowisk – podnóża gór Kopet Dag.

¹⁵ V.M. MASSON, V.I. SARIANIDI, *Central Asia: Turkmenia before...*, pl. 51; R. BOUCHARLAT, H.-P. FRANCFORT, O. LECOMTE, *The citadel of Ulug Depe and the Iron Age archaeological...*, fig. 12a-d; G.A. KOŠELEŃKO (ed.), *Drevnejšie gosudarstva Kavkaza i Srednej*

Azii, Arheologija SSSR 8, Moskva 1985, 355-356, pl. LXVII, LXVIII.

¹⁶ G. GUTLYEV, *Raskopki Garaoj-depe...*, figs. 1, 2, 4.

The motifs of the sub-group B 11 and B 12 – wide bands and irregular filling with color – dominate at Garaoi-depe. The motifs such as T 1, T 2.2, T 3.3, C 3.7, C 5.3 are present exclusively at Ulug-depe, while L 7, B 2.1, B 10, B 12 occur only at Garaoi-depe. Few of the motifs that are very characteristic for Ulug-depe could possibly be present at Garaoi-depe – T 1, T 2.1, C 6 – chevrons filled within a checkered motif, triangle filled with color or oblique grid. In contrary, the motif in the form of a chevron consisting of intersecting parallel oblique lines (C 3.1, C 3.2) is barely present at Ulug-depe. However, one of variants of the above-mentioned motif was found at both sites (C 3.4–5). However, in the case of Ulug-depe they are characterized by a very small quantity of lines in each group (C 3.5). In result, the motif takes the original appearance, becoming very similar to the triangles filled within a checkered motif present at this site, in which the surface of the figure is

divided by double lines (T 6.7–9). This, in contrast, does not appear at Garaoi-depe. Some significant differences could also be observed within Group IV of decoration. Here the most original motifs were characteristic exclusively for Ulug-depe – E 3.5, E 4.1, E 4.6–11 – except one motif coming from Garaoi-depe (E 4.4). Other less sophisticated motifs – E 2.1, E 2.3 – were present almost only at Garaoi-depe. It should be emphasized here that all similar motifs – E 2.2, E 2.3 – as well as more original E 1 that were observed at Ulug-depe are uncertain.

The decorative motifs, present in the group of sites located in the River Murghab delta are less differentiated in contrary to the previous groups (Fig. 10). Initially, it should be emphasized that similarly to the piedmont zone, the analysis also encountered some difficulties here. This mostly concerns small quantity of published painted pottery examples at Uch-depe 10,¹⁷ Takhirbai-depe¹⁸ and few other

Name of the site	T 1	T 2.1	T 2.2	T 3.1	T 3.2	T 3.3	T 4	T 5	T 6	T 7	T 8	C 3.1	C 3.2	C 3.3-5	C 3.7	C 4	C 5.1-2	C 5.3	C 6	C 7	L 2	L 3	L 6	L 7	B 2.1	B 2.2	B 3-5	B 6	B 8	B 9.1	B 9.2	B 10	B 11	B 12	
Taip oasis		7/13	2	2/7	4/5	3/3		6	1/6		1	2/9	1	2	4/6	1	7	1	2		1				1/3			4		1/9		5	2	1	1
Uch-depe 10	1/1		2/2									1																							
No. 999	3/6		2/9		1		2	3/5	3/3		6/14	3/3		2		5/8											4	1/1	1/1			1/1	1/1		
Yaz-depe	5/15	2	4/12	1/2	1/3	1/2	6/23	1/2	1/1	8/17	3/4	1	3/5	8/10	7/15	2/15					1			2	1	1/2	2/2	3/4		1/1	1/1				
Togolok oasis	1/2		2/2		1		2					1					3																		
Takhirbai oasis								1				1/2					2/3		1										1/1						
Takhirbai-depe	1/1													1													1								
















Name of the site															
	E 1	E 2.1	E 2.2	E 2.3	E 2.4	E 2.5	E 2.6	E 3.4	E 3.5	E 3.6	E 4.1	E 4.3	E 4.4	E 4.5	E 4.6-11
Taip oasis	2/2	2/3	2/2		1/1										
Uch-depe 10															
No. 999			1/1					2/2							
Yaz-depe	1/2		2/2												1
Togolok oasis															
Takhirbai oasis															
Takhirbai-depe															

Fig. 10. The frequency of Yaz I painted motifs – Fourth group of sites – River Murghab delta.

Ryc. 10. Frekwencja motywów malowanych Yaz I – Czwarta grupa stanowisk – delta rzeki Murgab.

¹⁷ I.S. MASIMOV, B.N. UDEUMURADOV, *Novye materialy po ranneżeleznomu veku Nizovij Murgaba*, (in:) V.M. Masson, A. Atagarryev (eds.), *Turkmenistan v epohu ranneżeleznogo veka*, Aşgabat 1984, 12–27.

¹⁸ The pottery from these sites is known only from one plate of drawings published in: V.M. MASSON, *Drevnezemledel'českaá...*, pl. XLIII.

Name of the site	T 1	T 2.1	T 2.2	T 3.1	T 3.2	T 3.3	T 4	T 5	T 6	T 7	T 8	C 3.1	C 3.2	C 3.3-5	C 3.7	C 4	C 5.1-2	C 5.3	C 6	C 7	L 2	L 3	L 6	L 7	B 2.1	B 2.2	B 3-5	B 6	B 8	B 9.1	B 9.2	B 10	B 11	B 12
Group P1		5 5	1 1	1 1			1 2	3 4	2 5		2 3	6 6	5 5	6 6		1 1					1 1				1 1	1 1	1 1	1 1	2 5	1 1	2 5		7 7	3 3
Group P2	3 3	2 9	2 4	2 5	1 2	1 1		1 5	4 7	2 3		5 10	4 4	7 12	1 1		7 13				1 1				2 2	2 2	1 1	1 1					8 8	5 8
Group P3	5 6	4 7	1 1		1 2	1 1		2 5	2 12	1 1	5 6	1 5	1 1	5 6	1 3		2 5	1 1	2 5		4 7	2 3	3 3	1 1	1 3		5 5	1 4				1 2	22 22	5 7
Group M4	18 38	4 4	12 32	4 5	4 7	4 3	1 3	1 12	10 35	1 5	1 2	17 44	6 8	1 3	7 14	9 11	14 36	1 1	4 18		1 1	1 1			1 5	1 1	1 2	9 3	3 3	5 15		1 6	4 4	2 2

Name of the site	●	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—		
	E 1	E 2.1	E 2.2	E 2.3	E 2.4	E 2.5	E 2.6	E 3.4	E 3.5	E 3.6	E 4.1	E 4.3	E 4.4	E 4.5	E 4.6-11																					
Group P1			6 6		1 1	1 1	1 1				1 1																									
Group P2		1 2	1 1	1 1	3 3						1 1	1 1																								
Group P3	1 3	5 7	1 1	1 2					1 1		1 1		1 1												1 1		3 3						4 4			
Group M4	3 4	2 2	5 5		1 1										2 2																			1 1		

Fig. 10. The frequency of Yaz I painted motifs – the comparison of individual groups of sites.

Ryc. 10. Frekwencja motywów malowanych Yaz I – Porównanie poszczególnych grup stanowisk.

sites from the Togolok¹⁹ and the Takhirbai²⁰ oases. However, in order to examine the motifs frequency we should first analyze differences between all sites and oases in the Murghab delta.

The painted pottery from the River Murghab delta show stronger homogeneity in painted decoration than the pottery from the piedmont zone. The main feature of all the sites in the Murghab Delta is the almost total lack of such motifs as T 1, T 2.2, T 8, C 3.3-5 and lozenges (L 2-7). The most common motifs present in the Murghab Delta, mostly considering here pottery of the Taip micro-oasis,²¹ nameless sites No. 999²² and Yaz-depe²³ are motifs of T.2.1, T 3.1, T 6, C 3.1. However, there are some differences in the frequency of their occurrence at the each site. The same could be said about motifs – C 3.2, C 3.7, C 4, C 5, as well as about more rare motifs such as T 3.3, C 6, B 8, B 9.1. The pottery from the sites located in the Taip oasis is characterized by a presence of some motifs –

T 3.2, C 5.3 that do not occur on the pottery of other regions of Margiana but are known from the sites in the Kopet Dag piedmont belt.

Having characterized the decoration of Yaz I painted pottery in the four groups of sites described above, it now seems appropriate to compare these groups (Fig. 11). Firstly, we will examine westernmost groups of sites in the piedmont zone – Group I and Group II. The preliminary overview of occurrence of motifs here shows a great similarity in the pottery decoration. However, it is possible to specify some motifs that did not occur in one or other group of sites.

Even if in some cases the reconstruction of a motif is not sure because of too small or poorly preserved pottery sherds, the greater variation of the motifs decorating pottery of two sites: Garaoi-depe²⁴ and Ulug-depe, which were distinguished here as the third group seems evident. The most distinctive feature of this group is the presence of such

¹⁹ V.I. SARIANIDI, *Margiana in the Bronze Age*, (in:) Ph.L. Kohl (ed.), *The Bronze Age Civilization of Central Asia. Recent Soviet Discoveries*, New York 1981, 175.

²⁰ V.I. SARIANIDI, *Margiana in the Bronze Age...*, 187.

²¹ I.S. MASIMOV, *Novye pamätniki ranneželeznogo veka Murghabskogo oazisa*, (in:) *Novye arheologičeskie otkrytiä v Turkmenistane*, Ašgabat 1982, 20-33.

²² G.L. BONORA, M., VIDALE, *An aspect of the Early Iron Age (Yaz I) Period in Margiana: Ceramic production at Site No. 999*, (in:)

S. Salvatori, M. Tosi, B. Cerasetti (ed.), *Volume II. The Bronze Age and Early Iron Age...*, 153-194.

²³ V.M. MASSON, *Drevnezemledel'českaä...*; idem, *Poselenie pozdnej bronzy i rannego železa v del'te Murghaba*, "Kratkie Soobšeniä o dokladah i polevyh issledovaniäh Instituta Istorii Material'noj Kul'tury" 64, 1956, 61-7.

²⁴ G. GUTLYEV, *Raskopki Garaoj-depe...*, 42-3; I.S. MASIMOV, B.N. UDEUMURADOV, *Novye materialy po ranneželeznomu veku...*, 21, 24.

Name of the site	T 1	T 2.1	T 2.2	T 3.1	T 3.2	T 3.3	T 4	T 5	T 6	T 7	T 8	C 3.1	C 3.2	C 3.3-5	C 3.7	C 4	C 5.1-2	C 5.3	C 6	C 7	L 2	L 3	L 6	L 7	B 2.1	B 2.2	B 3-5	B 6	B 8	B 9.1	B 9.2	B 10	B 11	B 12
Piedmont area	8 9	11 21	3 6	3 6	2 4	2 2	1 2	6 14	8 24	3 4	7 9	12 21	5 10	18 24	1 4	1 1	9 19	1 1	2 6	1 1	4 8	2 3	3 3	1 1	1 6	1 1	8 8	1 6	2 5	2 4	2 6	1 2	37 37	13 18
Margiana	18 38	4	12 32	4 5	4 7	1 3	1 12	10 35	1 5	1 2	17 44	6 8	1 3	7 14	9 11	14 36	1 1	4 18	1 1	1 1	1 1	1 1	1 1	1 1	1 1	1 1	1 1	3 3	5 15	1 6	4 4	2 2		
















Name of the site															
Piedmont area	1	6 9	7 8	2 3	4 4	1 2	1 1		1 1	1 1	3 4	1 1	1 1	3 3	4 4
Margiana	3 4	2 2	5 5		1 1			2 2							1

Fig. 12. The frequency of Yaz I painted motifs – The overall comparison of motifs present in the Kopet Dag piedmont zone and the River Murghab delta (Margiana).

Ryc. 12. Frekwencja motywów malowanych Yaz I – Ogólne porównanie motywów obecnych na obszarze podnóży gór Kopet Dag i delty rzeki Murgab (Margiany).

motifs as C 3.7, C 5.3, C 6, and B 10 that do not occur at sites of Group I or II. The same can be said about such an additional element as E 3.5.

Still greater variation of the motifs is observed on the pottery from the sites in the Murghab Delta, named here as the fourth group.

If we compare decoration of pottery in Group III with Group IV, we find six motifs in Group IV that do not occur in Group III, and only two motifs known from Group III but not from Margiana. Only one motif that occurs on the pottery of Group II is absent in Group IV. But six motifs of Group IV do not appear in Group II. And at the end, the comparison of decorative motifs in Group I and IV: it is interesting that some motifs – T 4, C 4 and B 8 that are absent in Group II and III occur exclusively in Group I and IV. There is a lack of the motif T 1 as well as the additional element – E 2.3 in both these groups.

But if we compare decoration of Yaz I painted pottery found at the sites in the Kopet Dag piedmont belt with decoration of pottery found in the Murghab Delta (Fig. 12) we see that such motifs as – T 1, T 2.2, T 8, C 3.3-5, L 2-7, B 3-5, B 9.2 – are exclusively typical and appear almost only on the vessels of sites located in the Kopet Dag piedmont belt. Moreover, such motifs as B 11, B 12 have more examples in this area; whereas such motifs as T 3.1, C 3.7, C 4, B 9.1 are more distinctive for sites located in Margiana. In addition, some differences could be noted within additional decorative elements present on the

pottery of these regions that occurred more often on pottery from sites located in the Kopet Dag area.

Conclusion

The differentiation of pottery decoration is a significantly ignored issue in the studies on the Yaz I culture. Despite the fact that even a superficial overview of decoration of Yaz I pottery could reveal some significant differences, many scholars were eager rather to search similarities between very distant sites basing on few decorative motifs. However such an approach seems clearly unjustified. Analysis of frequency of the motifs that are present on pottery of Yaz I period in the area of Turkmenistan revealed a number of differences which distinguish individual sites or, what is more relevant here, differences between the groups of sites. The reason for this differentiation is difficult to interpret in the present state of research.

Only the new stratigraphical research can give the answer to the obvious question whether there is there any relation between differences in decoration of pottery observed at individual sites and the chronology of these sites.

Nazar Buławka, M.A.
I Armii Wojska Polskiego 41 C
07-200 Wyszaków
nazar.bulawka@gmail.com

NAZAR BUŁAWKA

**MOTYWY DEKORACYJNE CERAMIKI WCZESNEJ EPOKI ŻELAZA (YAZ I)
W POŁUDNIOWYM TURKMENISTANIE**

W e wczesnej epoce żelaza, około drugiej połowy II tys. p.n.e., rysuje się podział terytorium dzisiejszego Turkmenistanu na dwa obszary kulturowe – południowo-zachodni i południowo-wschodni. Pierwszy, na którym zidentyfikowano kulturę określaną jako kultura starożytnego Dachistanu, obejmował równinę rozciągającą się między Morzem Kaspijskim a górami Kopet Dag, łącznie z kilkoma dolinami w północno-wschodnim Iranie. Drugi, rozciągający się od podnóży tych gór poprzez deltę rzeki Murgab, był zajęty przez kulturę Yaz I, której nazwa pochodzi od stanowiska Yaz-depe, w delcie rzeki Murgab.

Wyróżniającą cechą kultury Yaz I jest obecność ręcznie lepionej i malowanej ceramiki. Ceramika tego typu występuje na licznych stanowiskach od strefy podgórskiej poczynając, poprzez Margianę, czyli terytorium delty rzeki Murgab, Baktrię i Sogdianę, dzisiejszy północny Afganistan i południowy Uzbekistan, po Kotlinę Fergańską. Nawet pobieżny przegląd motywów dekoracyjnych i form naczyń wskazuje na ich duże zróżnicowanie terytorialne. Tym samym teza, że ten rozległy obszar objęty został kulturą Yaz I staje pod znakiem zapytania. Trudno jednak rozstrzygnąć ten problem bez szczegółowej analizy ceramiki na poszczególnych terenach.

Niniejszy artykuł prezentuje wyniki analizy motywów dekoracyjnych występujących na naczyniach Yaz I południowego Turkmenistanu. Szczegółowa analiza ceramiki malowanej pozwoliła na wydzielenie czterech grup motywów (**Ryc. 2–6**). Pierwsza zawiera motywy trójkątne, spośród których należy wyodrębnić właściwe trójkąty od

innych motywów określanych mianem ustawionych wierzchołkiem ku górze szewronów. Następną grupę stanowią motywy o formie rombów. Trzecią grupę tworzą różnorodne otwarte motywy pasowe. Ostatnią natomiast formują różnorodne zebrane motywy dodatkowe, które niekiedy występują w wolnej przestrzeni między motywami poprzednich grup. Zbadano frekwencję występowania wydzielonych motywów na naczyniach poszczególnych stanowisk, jak i w grupach stanowisk leżących blisko siebie.

Rezultaty analizy motywów zostały przedstawione na pięciu przygotowanych zestawieniach (**Ryc. 7–12**), w których wyszczególniono wszystkie, również niepewne przykłady wskazania, na określony motyw (część mianownikowa skali ułamkowej) oraz przypadki najpewniejsze (część licznikowa). Zastosowanie podwójnej skali liczbowej jest tutaj uzasadnione przede wszystkim faktem słabej jakości niektórych publikacji, których rysunki mogły być zidentyfikowane jako kilka różnych motywów.

W efekcie przeprowadzonej analizy motywów zaobserwowano szereg różnic między poszczególnymi grupami stanowisk, a także między stanowiskami wewnątrz grup. Ponadto, w wyniku porównania dekoracji ceramiki występującej w analizowanych grupach stanowisk ustalono, że najwięcej różnic dzieli ceramikę ze stanowisk położonych u podnóży gór Kopet Dag i ceramikę znaną z delty rzeki Murgab. Wyjaśnienie tych różnic będzie możliwe dopiero po podjęciu badań stratygraficznych, przynajmniej na kilku ze stanowisk, na których stwierdzono obecność ceramiki Yaz I.